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EDITORIAL COMMENT



THE PRICE OF IGNORANCE

THE summer which has just closed seems to have shown an increase in all of those forms of illness which are commonly called filth diseases, which come from a lack of proper sanitary precautions where people are crowded together during the heated term.

If one is to judge from the prevailing newspaper reports, the epidemic of yellow fever in New Orleans has been most alarming; yellow fever and bubonic plague have been reported as threatening in the Panama Zone, while Russia and Germany have suffered from an unusual outbreak of cholera, and typhoid, meningitis, and all the more common forms of contagious diseases have been prevalent in many parts of our own country.

It seems strange that with the cause and prevention of such diseases so well understood by the two great professions of medicine and nursing that the public at large should remain in such total ignorance in these matters. It is perhaps hardly to be wondered at that the illiterate and dull among the masses remain in an unenlightened state, but that intelligent people, such as city officials are supposed to be, should permit conditions to exist which are conducive to these epidemics remains an ever-increasing mystery.

From an economic standpoint the cost of prevention, leaving out the entire question of suffering and death, would be infinitely less to the local government than the expense which must be entailed in suppressing and controlling any one of these epidemics.

We are of the opinion that the two professions of medicine and nursing are in a measure responsible for the ignorance of the people at large in regard to these questions, that knowledge through schools and

the public press should be more widely disseminated by them, and that no individual of either of these professions is exempt from obligations along these lines.

Every question concerning the public health, no matter how small the town or how large the city, is one in which the local doctor and the local nurse should be interested and active, and neither is carrying out the obligations of his or her separate profession, which calls for service which is first and always for the benefit of others, who remains passive and consents to reap the financial benefit of such public ignorance without having made every effort possible for the enlightenment of the people of the community in which they live.

Such preventive measures as are practised and such knowledge as has been disseminated has come, in every part of the world, from that small group of medical men who have always been true philanthropists and educators, the rank and file in the medical profession remaining passive, while the great nursing body, with the exception of a few individual exceptions, seem to be serenely unconscious of any obligation; but as specialists and co-workers with the medical profession we have no right to shirk these responsibilities longer.

This line of work is legitimately within the province of every nursing organization, and these organizations should make themselves felt in such matters as clean streets, sufficient water supply, proper flushing of sewers, cleanliness of public conveyances, school nursing, etc. If nurses are going to claim the right to call themselves members of a profession, they must begin to assume the responsibilities that such a profession entails.

We need a tremendous awakening all along these lines in regard to our responsibilities in the question of public health.

We are indebted to Miss Florence F. Quaife, of the Truro Infirmary, New Orleans, for the article published in this issue on yellow fever. As the introductory note explains, this paper was written by Dr. Rudolph Matas, was submitted to the medical society of New Orleans for its endorsement, and was ordered published and circulated for the benefit of nurses, physicians, and others who were engaged in the work of caring for yellow-fever patients.

This information is absolutely authentic, and nurses everywhere should familiarize themselves with the simple, practical facts which it contains.

Miss Quaife promises to send to the JOURNAL further information in regard to the epidemic of yellow fever in New Orleans and the nursing of these cases, and our pages are open to nurses everywhere who have had the actual practical experience of these summer epidemics.

In these days of rapid transportation, with hundreds of people every day moving from one section of the country to the other, no nurse can be sure that she will not be called upon at any hour to nurse one of those diseases which are considered peculiar to the tropical regions, and to those who are already enrolled on the Army Reserve List such knowledge is absolutely necessary. Imagine the humiliation of a nurse from the North who, being ordered into the yellow-fever district, finds herself totally ignorant of the simple precautions necessary for the prevention of the spread of the disease.

THE VOLUNTEER ELIGIBLE LIST.

Speaking of the Army Reserve List takes us again to the subject of the enrolment which is going on slowly in the Nurse Corps department in Washington. The names found there are few in number, but among them are some of our best-known women, heading the list being the name of Miss Isabel McIsaac, who, after twenty years of the most arduous and confining work in the nursing profession, stands ready to leave her little home, so lately acquired, with its privacy and independence, to serve her country in time of calamity or epidemic at an hour's call.

We are inclined to think, however, that the ranks of the volunteer eligible list should be filled by the younger women, just as the ranks of the army are filled by young men. That young men make more enduring soldiers is a recognized fact all over the world, and that they also come more readily under the rigid discipline which is necessary in handling great numbers of people is also recognized.

This applies, we believe, with equal force to nurses in the army; there must be enough of the older women of experience to organize and control, but the great body of the Nurse Corps should be made up of the younger women who have not exhausted their endurance by long years of arduous work, and who have not been so long from under the discipline of hospital training that the necessary military restraint will come as a great hardship.

We cannot believe that it is lack of patriotism that makes American nurses so backward in making this volunteer list a credit to our profession. We know that if the need were to arise, thousands of nurses would be clamoring for an opportunity to serve.

We want to know why nurses are so slow about it, what there is that they do not understand, or why it is that, being good American citizens, possessing both the skill and the strength, they hesitate to place their names on the honor list, which is what this voluntary service will mean.

To submit to discipline, endure hardship, and risk one's life if need be is what the Government is asking of the great nursing body, and this

is simply what a nurse's life stands for, but so far only forty-three women have signified their willingness to stand ready to serve their country in time of calamity or war.

THE REGULAR SERVICE.

During our recent visit to San Francisco we spent an afternoon at the United States General Hospital at the Presidio, where all nurses entering the service are sent for their first detail, and where those going to and coming from service in the Philippines make their headquarters.

Our visit was unannounced, but we were given an opportunity by Miss Gottschalk, the nurse in charge, to meet every nurse at the station, and we were impressed with the dignity and intelligence of this group of women.

The hospital is very large. We do not remember the number of beds, but it consists of a great many pavilions built around a square with a most beautiful operating-pavilion recently finished and equipped. The hospital, as a whole, seemed to be most liberally supplied with every necessary appliance for the most efficient care of the sick. The patients were carefully classified and that order and discipline so characteristic of the army service in time of peace was very apparent.

Of the new operating-pavilion we can only say, from a hasty visit, that we have never seen an equipment in any civil or private hospital that compares with it.

The nurses detailed to this service perform practically the same duties as in civil hospitals, preparing all dressings, catgut, solutions, etc., and caring for the pavilion and adjoining rooms.

The nurses' quarters were comfortable, the dining-room somewhat crowded, but we have known that condition to prevail in many civil hospitals. From what we were able to learn in so hasty a visit, an examination of charts and questions as to methods, etc., the work of this hospital seems to be carried on upon the most scientific lines.

In fact, in just the proportion that the Government manages its hospitals badly in time of war, it would seem to be managing them exceptionally well in time of peace.

The point which we wish to emphasize in connection with our very short visit at the Presidio is this: that we can see no reason why well-trained, properly disciplined nurses should enter the army service and do so much grumbling as we have personally known many of them to do. We are inclined to think that it is more rebellion against the rigid military discipline, which must be maintained for the women in the army as well as for the men, rather than from any real cause of complaint so far as their personal comfort is concerned.

Much has been accomplished in a very few years in the way of improvement in the army service. Promotion with rank, which will give the nurse social status in the army, is what the service needs and what must be brought about. When that has been secured the army department will become, as it properly should, the most distinguished branch of nursing that a woman can enter. What we need at present is calm, deliberate, common-sense criticism from the nurses in the service, made in such a manner that the great nursing body can understand the needs and intelligently coöperate in securing such legislation as will give rank and such other improvements as the service should have to give greater dignity to the nursing department of the army as a whole.

Let us have a calm, reasonable discussion of the eligible volunteer list and the regular army service that nurses generally may have a better understanding of both departments.

SOME THINGS ABOUT THE SUMMER JOURNEY

WE returned to the JOURNAL desk on September 6 after two months of constant and very delightful travel across the country to Portland by the Northern Pacific route, with a side trip to Yellowstone Park, down the coast, stopping in California at San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and Pasadena, then on the return trip a short stop at Tacoma, a few days in Seattle, North Yakima, and Spokane in Washington, another stop in Minneapolis and St. Paul, ending with a few days with Miss McIsaac at "Cranford." Although the trip was for pleasure, we visited a number of hospitals along the way and were entertained by nurses at most of the places where we stopped. We come back with our knowledge of hospitals and nursing standards greatly broadened, our patriotism increased,—if that were possible,—and our pride in the nursing profession wonderfully stimulated—if that also were possible.

The great expanse of unoccupied country between the Atlantic and Pacific impressed us quite as forcibly as it did when we made the trip more than a quarter of a century ago, but the progress that men have made in mastering the obstacles and in developing the resources of the West was a constant surprise and a never-failing interest. The development of the Northwest especially has been very graphically written up in the *World's Work* for August, with a series of illustrations that make an excellent souvenir of the summer's journey for those who have been over the ground.

The Yellowstone Park has been too frequently described to need more than passing mention—more than to say that one must see it to

appreciate its charm. It is the almost supernatural action of geysers, paint-pots, hot pools, and cold streams that make it so interesting seen under comfortable conditions of travel and with the added charm of staging through the beautiful mountain scenery of the Rockies.

One feature of the Park we think has not been sufficiently emphasized, however, and that is the lake, the highest body of water of its size in the country, in altitude a "mile and a half above Boston," as we were informed by the captain of the steamer that carries passengers across from the "Thumb" to the Lake Hotel. Perhaps because no scenery is ever perfect to us without water the view of this beautiful lake as we came over the crest of the last hill seemed the crowning beauty of the Park. Snow-capped mountains on the one side and forests of dark, silent pines on the other give a peculiar beauty to this sheet of water, and at no point are the mountains seen to such an advantage as from the little steamer when midway across the lake.

It is an interesting instance of the difficulties that have been overcome to make the Yellowstone trip attractive to know that the small steamer that has been on the lake for a number of years was brought across from Gardiner in sections, more than fifty miles, during the early days of the development of the Yellowstone, and that the new boat, which was launched on September 16, an invitation to which ceremony we received, was built on the shore of the lake, all material and machinery having to be carted on six-horse teams over the mountain roads of the Park. When one considers that this boat carries six hundred people, and in furnishing and equipment meets all the requirements of excursion boats of the highest class, it is hardly possible to realize the enterprise that has been necessary for its construction. It is the work of a private company, not the Government. No one should visit the Yellowstone without taking the little trip on the lake. It is not included in the regular ticket, but it is well worth the extra charge, and one evades a long stretch of dusty, level road by doing so. Nurses need diversion when they rest, and no better way of being entertained can be found than by taking this most interesting trip through the Yellowstone Park.

Even nurses can be interested in "irrigation," and during our trip we were able to study the system by which the sage-brush desert is made to produce apples that weigh a pound, fruits and vegetables of every kind, and three crops of alfalfa and hay in a season. So easy did it all seem to make things grow that we are tempted to recommend to nurses fruit-growing by irrigation as a refuge when professional interest and strength begin to fail. It is said to be very much easier than farming in

the East, although it would seem to require, owing to the use of many labor-saving devices, a higher order of intelligence.

It is marvellous to think that only water is needed to make the desert blossom as a rose and that each year the ingenuity of man is bringing water farther and farther from its source for this purpose.

THE HOSPITAL SYSTEM OF THE COAST.

In all of the cities visited we found hospitals, some magnificent in construction and equipment,—hotels really for the sick,—owned by companies of physicians who are the stockholders and directors as well as physicians in attendance, and who conduct training-schools and reap large profits from the investment—from ten to sixty-five per cent. we were told. Such hospitals are said to be a necessity, especially in California, where so many people in doubtful health flock to avoid the severe climate of other sections of the country. They are intended only for the class of people who are able to pay and who are accustomed to hotel prices and hotel “extras.”

But we found that the so-called general hospitals and church hospitals cared only for people who could pay or be paid for, endowed beds being very few even in the church hospitals, and we were told that the poor who applied for admission were sent to the county hospital—that there were no worthy poor on the Pacific Coast, that the man who had no money was either lazy or vicious, as work was so plenty in a new country that no man need be without means when overtaken by sickness. We also were impressed with the fact that few people seemed to know much about the county hospitals. We had the curiosity to visit the County Hospital in San Francisco—a place with a bad reputation in 1880 and that would seem to have progressed backward even with the introduction of a training-school. We do not intend to describe this hospital more than to say that it is under the control of the political machine, the members of which, it would seem to us, must be lacking in the common milk of human kindness—a man-governed institution for graft. Many good superintendents of nurses have attempted to reform this place, but as soon as suggestions requiring honest administration have been insisted upon a vacancy has occurred. There is an awakening among the citizens of San Francisco, however, that promises better conditions for the aged and sick who must seek refuge in this place.

The County Hospital in Los Angeles we did not visit, but we were told it was “not as bad as the one in San Francisco,” and in Portland the County Hospital was spoken of as a place way off somewhere that no one knew about.

How the prosperous city of Seattle provides for its pauper sick is

shown in Miss Major's little sketch in this issue. Miss Major has brought a woman's domestic instinct to bear upon a very crude and novel situation, and the result is a homelike, clean, and comfortable little hospital made out of an old boat. We inspected every nook and corner of it, and never have we seen a better illustration of the fact that *buildings* are not the most important requisite for the care of the sick. The right kind of a woman with power must always come first.

We were interested to visit the County Hospital of Seattle, and here we found an exceptionally comfortable institution—a good building, charmingly situated, with an atmosphere of cleanliness and sunshine everywhere, tents at one side for tubercular cases, and a vegetable garden with fruits and flowers in abundance. We were told that the excellent condition of this hospital was entirely due to the character of the man at the head and the matron, who were sincerely conscientious in the work they had undertaken, and that in spite of politics the place was well conducted. We were most courteously received and urged to inspect every part of the institution. There is no training-school here, but the nurses were attractive-looking women and, so far as one could judge from so superficial an inspection, were taking excellent care of the patients. Everything was sweet and clean, quite in contrast to the County Hospital at San Francisco.

Seattle has just built a magnificent club-house, and the decorations of the “*bar*” in the new Alaska building—a big business block—are the pride of the city. The spirit of charity as we associate it with the care of the sick is seemingly lacking among the people on the Pacific Coast. The pioneer days are passing, however, and the charitable spirit will naturally follow the commercial age which every new settlement seems to have to pass through.

We believe the awakening is to come largely through the nurses, but we must wait for space in another issue in order to discuss the training-schools and nurses of the Pacific Coast.

STATE MATTERS

WE call the attention of our readers to several important State announcements in the Official Department. New York and Ohio hold regular meetings in October. The Maryland Board of Nurse Examiners make an appeal to nurses to be more active in the matter of registration. Work in the New York office has been delayed during the summer by the absence of the president and secretary of the Board of Examiners, but is now resumed and will be carried on regularly. The terms of the

waiver expire in April, 1906, after which date no certificates will be issued without an examination.

MEETING OF THE NEW YORK STATE NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

The regular meeting of the New York State Nurses' Association will be held at Niagara Falls on Tuesday, October 17, at ten A.M. and two P.M. Delegates will register at nine A.M. The Mayor of Niagara Falls will deliver the address of welcome and several very interesting speakers are expected.

On Wednesday, the 18th, an open meeting will be held for the purpose of discussing the Registration Act. Representatives of hospitals and nurses who are not members of the association are cordially invited. The meetings will be held in the auditorium of the Natural Food Conservatory.

The local committee recommends the following hotels: Temperance House Annex, two dollars per day; Hotel Imperial, two dollars and fifty cents per day; Hotel Powers, two dollars per day.

Some interesting trips are being arranged for, especially the one by the Gorge Route, following the Niagara River to Lewiston and back on the Canadian side through Queenston and Victoria Park.

There should be a very large attendance at this meeting, as it is within easy distance of so many nursing centres in the western part of the State, and Niagara offers rare attractions to nurses at a greater distance. It is hoped that excursion rates can be arranged for, and nurses should inquire if this has been accomplished before buying their tickets. In parties of not less than ten we think this can often be done from local points.

We are anxious to have the names and full addresses of the presidents and corresponding secretaries of all the twenty-one State associations to publish in the November JOURNAL, and to be kept in each number during the year. We shall do this in response to a number of requests, and the list to be valuable must be accurate and complete. We ask all such officers to send their addresses at once.

CHANGES IN THE JOURNAL STAFF

WE regret exceedingly to announce to our readers the resignation of Miss Elizabeth R. Scovil as editor of the department of "Notes from the Medical Press." Miss Scovil is leaving her old home in New Brunswick to accompany her brother and his motherless family to a new home in the Far West, and she feels that the regular work and time which the

department requires will be more than she can continue to give under the changed conditions of her life.

The editor of *Medical Notes* has not only to put her material into form for the press, but must examine a dozen or more medical journals each month and cull out such ideas or items as will be of special value and interest to nurses.

Miss Scovil's gratuitous work has been splendidly done, her copy always on time, and the *JOURNAL* makes full and grateful acknowledgment for the liberal service of such a high order of excellence that she has given to it for so long a time.

We extend to Miss Scovil for the *JOURNAL* and its hosts of readers earnest wishes for great happiness in her new environment.

Miss Scovil will make up the department for the November number, and in that number we hope to announce her successor.

THE COLLABORATORS.

The staff of collaborators remains the same as last year with the exception of two new members added to the list, Miss Mary S. Loomis, of Seattle, and Miss A. Laura Goodman, of Spokane, who will represent the *JOURNAL* in the State of Washington.

Miss Loomis has lived for many years on the Pacific Coast. She is a graduate of the Illinois Training-School and returned to the coast to practise her profession. She is in charge of the operating-rooms at the Seattle General Hospital and is president of the Nurses' Association of that city.

Miss Goodman is a graduate of the Harper Hospital, Detroit. She has been in Spokane only two years, but is an active worker for State registration and the corresponding secretary of the Nurses' Association.

We take this time to remind our collaborators that the *JOURNAL* looks to them for information on all nursing matters from their districts, and expects them to induce nurses especially to contribute to its literary pages. The office is not in any sense complimentary. It carries with it an obligation for the advancement of the profession. The collaborators are the *JOURNAL*'s special agents to stimulate nurses to literary effort, a department of progress in which it is often said nurses are very lacking. Such development is essential for professional growth, and this *JOURNAL* is the product thus far of the literary efforts and literary standards that nurses have attained, but it has been too much the work of a few rather than representative of the profession as a whole. One of the very important educational motives for the *JOURNAL*'s existence was to stimulate nurses to literary effort, and in promoting such effort the collaborators have been and must continue to be great factors. We

urge upon them, therefore, greater activity along these lines for the coming year, acknowledging with pleasure our indebtedness for work done in the past.

The JOURNAL begins the new year with brightest prospects. The awaked interest of the *alumnæ* associations promises to soon relieve the individual stockholders of all financial responsibility and to make the JOURNAL in fact the property as well as the official organ of the Associated *Alumnæ*.

It only needs to have the individual *alumnæ* associations increase their membership dues to include the subscription to the JOURNAL to make it possible to broaden its educational value, improve the quality of the magazine, and at the same time make it cheaper, pay all contributors and officers for their material and work, and make it the most splendid professional journal the world has ever seen.

We offer this suggestion to the *alumnæ* associations to be taken up for early consideration with the work of the year just now beginning.

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY.

We also urge greater activity in the organization along the lines of civic work, and we want to see every *alumnæ* association represented on the Board of Managers of its hospital and training-school. We realized in listening to the papers and discussion at the Portland Congress that there is hardly a question bearing on public morals or public health where the experience and judgment of nurses is not needed. We hope the day is not far distant when nurses will be recognized as being something more than paid agents of philanthropic associations, but they must show their interest and demonstrate their ability before such recognition will be voluntary on the part of the public.

The time is coming when nurses will take care of all sick people as the natural responsibility of the profession. It is what all nursing education is leading towards, and in the long future the people whom nurses serve will not be only those who can pay twenty-five dollars per week. Competition and an overstocked market will make it necessary for nurses to take the fee of the man who can pay fifteen, ten, or even five dollars. When she is recognized as belonging to a profession she will be able to charge more than twenty-five dollars—perhaps one hundred—to the man who can pay it, and in this way strike an average which will make nursing much more profitable than it is to-day; the great middle class will be properly nursed, the untrained woman will not be needed because she is cheap, the public will be better served, the nurse better paid, and the doctor better pleased. In the meantime, push forward State registration and all organization work. The strength of the movement is in the local associations.